



Government of the District of Columbia

DC Commission for Women

Meeting Minutes

March 9, 2008

Citywide Conference Center (1112 South)

441 4th Street NW, Washington, DC

Meeting commenced at 6:40PM

ROLL CALL

Attendees:

Commissioners: Reta Jo Lewis (Chair), Chrissie Juliano, Lacey O'Neal, Cynthia Harrison, Ruby G. Moy, Donna Watts-Brighthaupt, Mioshi Moses, Cherita Whiting, Lisa Maatz*, Stacy Long*, Cristina Martin-Firvida*, Winona Scott*

YWT Members: Jessica Solomon (Chair), Joi R. Orr, Loryn Wilson

Guests: Mary Frances Kornak, Alyssa Best, Julie Rones, * Pamela Pressley*, Doris D. Cutler

OWPI Staff: Niambi Jarvis, Tambra Stevenson

* via conference call

MEETING MINUTES

Commissioners will submit their proposed changes via email. Tambra Stevenson served as scribe for the meeting.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Education, Labor and Training Committee

Cherita Whiting spoke about the proposed integration of Pre-K through 8 in the DC public schools. She has several meetings set up with Deborah Gist on January 18th, Chancellor Rhee on January 17th and parent groups. She stated that State Education Officer Gist has the final say on restructuring the schools. She pointed out there are a number of parent and community groups concerned about the lack of "process" and community engagement under the Mayor's DCPS Education Reform given him total authority over the schools. Mothers

expressed safety concerns of having Pre-K students interact with 8th grad students e.g. in the bathrooms, lunches, recess and the use of profanity. She noted the January 8th Washington Post article addressed the topic as well. Commissioner Juliano (?) referred Commissioner Whiting to National Women's Law Center (Helen) for expertise on the early childhood topic. She noted that an email was circulated stating that a public hearing on the Pre-K through 8 was being transformed into 23 meetings were to occur in one day, which the Chancellor noted she cannot attend them all.

Action Item: Draft memo on behalf of the Commission addressing Pre-K through 8th grade and include early childhood and middle school experts and benchmarks similar models in other cities. Cherita Whiting will lead effort in gathering information.

Public Safety Committee

Cherita Whiting noted Chief Lanier, Melvin Scott are working to address neighborhood safety. Funding was increased to install more neighborhood cameras in the community. She has met with Cheryl Pendergrass and Diane Croons who represent school safety. No action items reported.

YEAR IN REVIEW 2007

Reta Jo Lewis recommended having the newsletter distributed to the voters. OWPI has been busy reaching out to the women's empowerment community. The newsle

Action Items: (1) Contact John F. in EOM to distribute the newsletter to DC voters. (2) Commissioners will submit remarks/edits by 9:00 am, Jan. 10, 2007.

30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DC COMMISSION FOR WOMEN PLANNING

Niambi Jarvis mentioned that we should consider a cause marketing campaign initiated by the DC Commission for Women to culminate and celebrate women in the District of Columbia. She also mentioned about having a reunion for past commissioners and reviving the DC Women's Hall of Fame and state women's leadership development.

Mioshi Moses recommended selecting Hall of Fame inductees based on selected topics.

Cynthia Harrison recommended having a 30th Anniversary kick-off event for Women's History month.

Jessica Solomon recommended partnering with the DC Commission for Arts and Humanities and doing a 30th Anniversary limited edition poster or print.

Reta Jo Lewis recommended developing a 30th Anniversary of the DC Commission for Women committee. She knows the Commission for Arts and Humanities Chair, Ann Hudson and will facilitate the introduction to discuss the potential project.

The 30th Anniversary Committee includes Joi Orr, Jessica Solomon (Co-Chair), Doris Cutler, Mioshi Moses (Co-Chair), and Chrissie Juliano.

Niambi will speak with Lafayette Barnes to discuss the Commissions donor tracking needs for the Anniversary celebration.

Donna Watts-Brighthaupt and Lacey O'Neal are the Public Affairs Committee Co-Chairs who will assist in the publicity of the Anniversary events.

Niambi Jarvis proposed developing a 30th Anniversary Logo to endorse women-related events and partner with organizations with certified programs in recognition of women's empowerment.

Donna recommended to build up momentum and maximize the effort by focusing on a few over-arching topics that the Commission could be remembered for.

Reta Lewis also suggested hosting an event to celebrate women who are working for the District of Columbia.

Reta recommended voting on topics to the 30th Anniversary Committee and Co-Chairs. She said to think outside of the box, consider having a signature event, and be creative.

Legislative Committee

PAID AND SICK LEAVE LEGISLATION

Cynthia Harrison gave an update on the paid and sick leave legislation. She noted that on the radio the Mayor stated the current legislation would need reform. Every single Councilmember supported the topic and lobby day occurred already.

DC Commission for Women is on record for supporting this issue. Mayor Fenty determined he will not sign the legislation in its current state because it poses a burden on local businesses and recommended to revisit for domestic violence and family-related issues have mandated paid and sick days (accrue up to 7 days). The gender neutral legislation is important to women advocacy groups in

providing time for women impacted by domestic violence, which is high in the District as well as those with children. California and Washington have passed this law that's more expansive and similar to Kennedy's federal legislation. Exemptions will be made to some industries e.g. hospital workers. Thursday, January 22 and February 5 are possible dates. Robin Runge gave an overview on lobbying activities associated with the pending legislation.

Action Item: Follow up with Kai Blisset in the legislative affairs office, get a formal policy statement from the Mayor, Barbara Lang of the DC Chamber of Commerce, DC Employment Justice Center and Karen Minatelli. Also get a copy of the past policy statement from the DC Commission for Women. The Commission agreed that a Commission representative should be present at the DC Chamber of Commerce's small business conference to address the paid and sick leave proposed legislation.

International Committee

The current chair is Ruby Moy and Christina Martin. DC Commission for Women has become a standing member of the various sister city committees. Athens Sister City Meeting - January 23, 4-5pm in the Mayor's Ceremonial Room and January 24th 4-5 pm for the Seoul Korea meeting.

Action Item: Have commissioners state if they will be attending the upcoming meetings.

Public Relations Committee

Lacey is waiting to hear what programs are available to promote.

OWPI DIRECTOR REMARKS

Niambi mentioned that the National Association for Commission for Women's Annual Meeting will be held in July 16-19 in Albuquerque, NM. Niambi will forward information, if Commissioners are interested in attending and seeking sponsorship for the trip.

HIV/AIDS UPDATE

Tambra Stevenson proposed the Commission partner with the National Council for Negro Women on HIV/AIDS Awareness Days - Black History Month and Women's History Month. She noted the "ACT Against AIDS" leadership mobilization campaign that NCNW is coordinating locally and would like to have the support of the Commission and the Mayor's Office.

Mary Frances Kornak, Commission Volunteer partners with Karen Pomerantz of the Metro Washington Public Health Association and DC Fight Back in Ward 8.

Action Item: Tambra Stevenson will follow up with NCNW, BET Foundation about partnering and planning future HIV/AIDS and Women events to address young and older female populations.

YOUNG WOMEN'S TASK FORCE

Jessica Solomon is the newly appointed chair of the Young Women's Task Force.

Action Item: Jessica Solomon will be meeting with OWPI, aligning the YWTF with a strategic plan for 2008, planning a retreat and host an upcoming event for the YWTF members.

CHAIR REMARKS

Reta gave kudos to the OWPI, the Commission and the YWTF and is excited about chairing the Commission. Her focus is on partnerships and working with Cabinet agencies – DC Parks & Recreation would like to partner and focus on its literacy initiatives. She stressed the Commission should serve as an advocate and ensure Agencies set aside funding for women and girls. She stated that we must not forget that women want to be economically empowered as well on social related issues. Women entrepreneurs need to meet 25%. She met with the Washington Convention Center and get women business owners play. We must take a leadership role on women empowerment. We must think about what are the important things that the Commission focused on year-by-year in moving the agenda for women and girls.

She wants Commissioners to be aggressive, active and in attendance. She encouraged Commissioners to serve as a resource to OWPI and must not reinvent the wheel. This Commission is important and as we move into this 30th Anniversary we must put our brand and stamp on the city and show that we are making a major move on women's issues. This will also improve the Commission's chances of receiving additional funding. We must serve as an advocate and work within the process and not as renegades. If anyone has recommendations as a team, we must operate collectively. 2008 is going to be an exciting year.

Adjournment

Reta Jo Lewis adjourned the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Minutes submitted by: Tambra Stevenson; Minutes approved by: DC Commission for Women